



# NEW VISIONS

## Cushing Street Apartments Completed Eric Gloss is one of the first residents

The development of the Cushing Street Apartments was completed in July and now houses 12 full-time residents. One of the first occupants was Eric Gloss.

Eric transitioned out of his parent’s home to live more independently at Cushing. He loves his new apartment and enjoys the friends and staff members he’s met there. Aspire assisted with the transition and continues to provide support to Eric. “The Aspire folks help me out with transportation and residential habilitation for things like washing dishes and cleaning,” said Eric. “They also help me go over my calendar.” As it happens, Eric’s calendar is rather full. He is incredibly involved in community activities and participates in many

*Continued on page 9.*



**Cushing Street Residents:** Front: Joe Osterhout and Josh Pietro. Back (left to right): Nick Mages, Eric Gloss, Mike Whitfield, Eric Volk, Lindsay Davis, Amy Pring, Morgan Abbey and Shanda Baldwin.



### MEET ERIC

**Favorite Activities:** Helping teach kids baseball, watching sports

**Favorite Travel Spot:** Myrtle Beach. I go each Spring for the Mingo Bay Classic baseball tournament

**Place I want to visit:** Walt Disney World in Florida – I was there when I was ten and loved it!

**Favorite movies/shows:** Harry Potter, the original Star Trek, House and JAG

**Hobbies:** Bowling, Facebooking, PS2 Gaming

**Favorite Music:** Country, especially Brooks and Dunn

**Fan of:** I’m a HUGE Buffalo Bills, Sabres and Cleveland Indians fan

**Favorite Food to Cook:** I make a mean tuna casserole

**Favorite Food to Bake:** Cheesecake (and I like eating it too)

**Pets:** No way, I’m allergic.

**Dreams:** To become a sports broadcaster or work for the Democratic Party

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# EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

Thomas Sy



## Aspire in 2010 and Beyond: Succeeding in Challenging Times

Those of us associated with human services and with a mission of helping the less fortunate have been forced to respond to cuts in revenue and services this past year given the economy and New York State's ongoing fiscal crisis. For Aspire and other providers of services to the developmentally disabled, 2010 saw cuts to three core programs: Housing, Day Services and Service Coordination. Yet, in the midst of such an environment, I am proud to report we have continued to progress as an agency, open new programs, and serve new individuals.

For example, because of your support and the work of our dedicated staff and volunteers, our 2010 Aspiring Artists Celebration was another huge success. We also completed the HUD-financed apartment building in Fredonia that is allowing 12 young adults to take the next step on their journey toward greater independence.

At our annual Employee Celebrations event, we not only celebrated exemplary employees but introduced new agency values. We have had eight agency values for a number of years and are a values-driven organization. However, we felt the previous values were no longer in sync with the agency and needed to be updated and simplified. As you read about our three easy-to-remember values – People, Performance and Partnerships – I think you'll agree that they are worth celebrating.

Aspire will also be launching our latest brand awareness campaign during the first quarter of 2011. Our new promotions are designed to update the previous and highly successful campaigns and reflect the new direction we are taking as an agency. We look forward to your feedback.

Lastly, I would be remiss to not ask you in advance to "gear-up" for what is certain to be a previously unseen assault on the developmental disability field given our reliance on state funds. We will not only see a full year of cuts that began in 2010 but are hearing outrageous percentage cuts on top of that. Please go to [Aspirewny.org](http://Aspirewny.org) or the Aspire Facebook page and submit your email to us so we are prepared to mobilize come February.

We continue to value your support and wish you and yours a wonderful holiday.

Sincerely,  
Thomas A. Sy  
Executive Director

### NEW ASPIRE VALUES: PEOPLE. PERFORMANCE. PARTNERSHIP.

At the Employee Recognition Dinner on November 12, Tom Sy, executive director, and Janet Hansen, associate executive director, announced three new, concise values for Aspire. The hope is that this shortened list of values will be easier to recall and become "words to live by" during the workday for Aspire employees.

**People.** We put the personal needs and goals of those we support first. We recognize the value and the potential of every employee. We listen and learn from those around us, especially those for whom we provide services. We know that everyone can make a difference and act accordingly, and recognize the dignity and unique rights of all of those whom we encounter.

**Performance.** We give the best we can at all times, demonstrating compassion and passion. We strive for excellence in all that we do. We are honest, ethical and accountable. We meet every challenge with professionalism and with heart. We meet change with innovation. We live up to our responsibilities and our commitment to those we support.

**Partnership.** We work together as a team, to make a positive impact in the lives of the people we support and in our own. We are responsive and responsible to our partners – employees, the families and personal support systems of those who receive our services, other care agencies and our community.

## Aspire of WNY Hosts Public Art Show and Reception at Merge Restaurant

Works from artists in Aspire's "iXpress" arts program were displayed at Merge Restaurant in Buffalo during the months of October and November. A reception was held on Tuesday, November 16th to celebrate the artists' work.

This first-of-its-kind event for Aspire was part of our effort to infuse the inspiring work of iXpress artists into the mainstream art scene. *iXpress reinforces that participants are first and foremost artists*, who also happen to be challenged with a disability.

Featured artists in this show included Sarah Doueck, Mark Dunato, Stephen Pfeffer, Veleka Garrid, Mary Hunt, Tom Lesinowski, Mike O'Brien, Cheryl Rackl, Liz Skerker, Stacy Wetherwax, Tom Wienckowski and Bill Nosek.



## 7th Annual Aspiring Artists Event is Bigger and Better Than Ever

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You could see it in the faces of attendees. Awe. They were simply amazed at the striking pieces of art presented at this year's Art & Wine Celebration. The original, framed artwork was stunning. The note cards, bags, wall plaques and other "art infused" merchandise practically sold out. The food display, beer and wine samples and inspiring music from Universal Mind were all fabulous.



The event, which took place under a huge tent in the parking lot of the Aspire headquarters, was a unique and fun experience for all.

"Aspire's Art & Wine Celebration was created seven years ago as a way to recognize and celebrate the extraordinary creative talents of people with disabilities. That premise remains the foundation for this event and our greatest success is seeing attendees blown away by the artwork. It gets better every year." Stated Michael Holley, Aspire's Director of Development.

Our enthusiastic guest auctioneer Scott Levin from WGRZ Channel 2 News helped raise nearly \$10,000 from our live auction which offered seven original works. This was the best result in the seven-year history of the event!

An additional \$4,525 was realized through the silent auction which consisted of additional original works of art as well as a private Universal Mind gig. Overall, our live and silent auctions raised 50% more than in 2009 and the event raised \$80,000.

Proceeds from the celebration will allow more individuals with disabilities to develop their artistic talents at Aspire's iXpress Art Program.



## EVENT HIGHLIGHTS

- 750 attendees
- Creative work from over 20 artists
- Live and silent auction proceeds increased by 50%
- Raised \$80,000



## RECEIVE E-MAIL UPDATES, NEWS



Become a friend of Aspire and sign up to receive e-mail updates and newsletters. Go to [www.aspirewny.org](http://www.aspirewny.org) and click on the e-newsletter button at left.

## THANKS TO OUR ASPIRING ARTISTS EVENT SPONSORS

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### Entertainment

Dopkins & Company, LLP

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Barefoot Wine by

Empire Merchants North

Crystal Rock

Flying Bisons Brewing

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Johnson Estate Winery

Ramada Inn & Conference

Center

Rich Renaissance Catering

Spot Coffee

Wegmans

### Master Circle (\$1,500+)

The Brett Eller Family

Family of Laura Pennington  
& Robert Gawel, Jr.

Independent Health

Janet Hansen

Main Mobility

### Artiste Circle (\$1,000+)

Eaton Office Supply

Rich Products

### Apprentice Circle (\$500+)

Dynavox / Mayer-Johnson

Jaeckle Fleischmann &

Mugel

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# Giving to Aspire

On behalf of more than 2,800 children and adults, thank you.

We gratefully acknowledge the following individuals and organizations who have made contributions to Aspire. This listing includes new donations, gifts and pledges of \$50 or more made from February 1, 2010 through November 12, 2010.

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Adoption Star

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Although we try to be as accurate as possible, mistakes or omissions may occur. Please accept our sincere apologies. To make corrections, contact Michael Holley at 716.505.5512 or michael.holley@aspirewny.org.

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## EMPLOYEE GIVING

Michael Holley, Director of Development



Our employees once again led the effort to ensure that the best and most innovative services were provided to those who count on us. Cumulative giving through the 2009 Aspire Employee Appeal topped \$70,000, and we're currently on course towards increasing that total through our 2010 appeal.

For those of you who have already made a donation, thank you! Our hope is that every employee will consider increasing his or her contribution this year by just \$2 per pay period. Looking ahead, political uncertainty and the ongoing economic downturn will translate into continued funding challenges. Each dollar you give will really make a difference.

If you've misplaced the pledge card that was mailed to you, please contact Communications & Development at 505-5510. As in the past, every donor will be eligible to win one of several raffle prizes, including additional days off and gift cards. Prizes will be drawn in early January at the conclusion of the campaign.

Thank you in advance for your consideration. Happy Holidays!

*If you're not an employee of Aspire but would like to make a year-end gift, please use the enclosed reply envelope. We appreciate any and all support!*

## Aspire Offers New Transitional Program for Younger Students



Aspire has introduced a new transitional program called World of Work (WOW). The WOW program is an alternative vocational program designed for students ages 14-16 years old. The WOW program will teach students transferrable skills at an early age, helping to lay a solid vocational foundation which they can build upon throughout high school. Students will have the opportunity to get hands-on experience in multiple real-world settings with the support of an Employment Specialist. They will be taught about typical employer expectations, work etiquette and dressing for success. To learn more about the WOW Program or any of our transition services, call 836.7235.

## Eric Gloss: One of Cushing Street Apartments' First Residents

*Continued from front cover*

recreational programs. He helps out with the football team at the Dunkirk High School, serving as the equipment manager. He also runs water and ice out to the players. He says it helps keep him shape. In spring he teaches kids baseball and travels with the high school team to Myrtle Beach for the yearly tournament. He also helps out with the summer baseball league and volunteers at the adult day care center on Central Avenue, playing games like bingo with seniors and helping them on and off the transport vans.

He's in a bowling league and plays on the D&K Furniture team. His current average is a 106, but he has his sights set on bringing it up to a 140.

He's an avid sports fan and follows the Buffalo Bills, Sabres and Cleveland Indians. He also watches Fredonia State hockey and basketball. He's dipped his toe into the world of sports broadcasting, having worked with Dan Palmer and announcing for Dunkirk High School sports on WDOE radio.

Like many of us, he's been baking cookies for the holidays and has his first Christmas tree up. The ornaments? Most of them have a Bills', Sabres' or Indians' logo on them.

Eric's also a staunch Democrat and volunteers at the local office. He aspires to become a Democratic Party employee or an on-air radio sportscaster.

## Mark Your Calendars: Exciting 2011 Aspire Event!

### GOING FOR THE GREEN GOLF TOURNAMENT – 21ST ANNUAL!

**Date:** 06/06/2011

**Times:** Morning (7:30)

Afternoon (12:30)

Flights Available

**Location:** Brookfield Country Club  
in Clarence, NY



Dig your clubs out for the 21st Annual “Going for the Green” Golf Tournament at Brookfield Country Club in Clarence, New York hosted by Aspire and Dopkins and Company, LLC. Support of this remarkable event directly enriches the lives of thousands of children and adults with developmental disabilities. Sponsorships and other opportunities for support are available.

For more information or to purchase tickets, call Cassandra Donnelly at (716) 505-5514.

## RECENT GRANT ACTIVITIES

As you all know, Aspire counts on the generous support of individuals, corporations and foundations to help us raise enough money every year to create and sustain the innovative programs and services that we provide to the people we serve.

Thanks to generous grants from the Ballow Law Firm, BUSINYS NY, New York State Council for the Arts, Peter & Elizabeth Tower Foundation and the Western New York DDSO, Aspire has received nearly \$70,000 to fund such diverse projects as transportation for Recreational Respite, funding for the College of Direct Supports, an interweave group tapestry through BOCES in the Southern Tier and the purchase of two Satalight™ SMART™ boards for the Center for Learning.

Aspire also has submitted more than \$180,000 in additional grant requests that are still awaiting approval.

Aspire is also pleased to announce the continuation of our internal Aspire Foundation Grants Program. Employees will once again have an opportunity to apply for funding of up to \$5,000 in support of an item or project that will benefit the people you serve. We hope to formally kick off this effort soon so please put on your creative caps and stay tuned for the official announcement!

## Aspire's Giving Tree

Christmas is just around the corner and many local children and families supported by Aspire will get to a magical day. Since 1995, the Service Coordination Department has been in charge of making Christmas wishes come true.

The service coordinators know which families have a need for the giving tree. Many of the families cannot wait in lines at the Salvation Army, so Aspire steps in to help during the holidays. Wish lists are given to the service coordinators and then placed on the giving trees, which are located at three sites – Audubon, 7 Community and Tri-Main. Several departments opted to participate this year instead of giving presents to co-workers. In addition, many outside companies chose names off the tree including Nixon Peabody, Rich Products and First Niagara Bank.



“It is wonderful to see all the presents arrive in our department and incredibly touching to see all the generosity, especially during these hard times,” said Mary Baginski, medicaid service coordinator, “this project would also not be possible without the support of my excellent co-workers who intimately know their families.”

One family was experiencing great difficulty managing their household. This family’s head of household is living with cancer and having to travel a great distance for treatments. He is the caregiver for a disabled son and 2 other children, one of which is in school. The school is out of the district and he must transport him on his own, which is very costly. When the family was chosen off the Giving Tree, the donor asked how they could be of further help and a generous gas card was also provided.

The week before Christmas, service coordinators and the intake department deliver the gifts to the families so their children have a special Christmas morning.

Thank you for making this year’s effort a success!

## JOIN THE ASPIRE TEAM!

Did you know that Aspire currently has over 20 job openings? Visit <http://www.aspirewny.org/careers/> and see if there’s an employment opportunity that’s right for you or someone you know.

# JOIN US FOR A Night on the Slopes

Thursday, February 3, 2011 • 4pm to 10pm  
Kissing Bridge North, Rt. 240, Glenwood



Come ski, snowboard or tube under the lights at Kissing Bridge North Area and Colden Tubing! Hit the slopes to support children and adults with developmental disabilities in our community at the third annual Night on the Slopes.

You'll enjoy six hours of open skiing or snowboarding with access to all trails, or four hours of tubing. Stop inside to warm up with our culinary sponsor, "Buffalo's Best! Catering." They'll provide two hours of pizza, chicken parmesan, pasta, salad, pop, hot chocolate and coffee in our private lodge. Cash bar also available.

Indicate the number of packages you'd like below. Then complete and mail this form to:  
Aspire of WNY, Communications & Development, 2356 North Forest Rd., Getzville NY 14068

## Single Ticket Packages

Each includes open buffet. Where included, group lessons will be held at 5:30 or 7 pm.

- \$50 - Ski/Snowboard Package** - \$15 Savings from 2010 price!  
(Includes lift ticket, lesson and rental)  
If purchased after 1/14 - \$60
- \$40 - Lift ticket Only**  
If purchased after 1/14 - \$50
- \$20 - Tubing (5 - 9 pm)**  
If purchased after 1/14 - \$25
- \$15 - Open buffet only

## Corporate Sponsorship

Each includes open recognition benefits.

- \$1000 - 4 packages of choice
- \$750 - 3 packages of choice
- \$500 - 2 packages of choice
- \$250 - 1 package of choice

Can't decide between skiing/snowboarding or tubing? Add tubing to your ski/snowboard package for just \$10 more! That's a \$10 savings off the price if purchased separately.

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ COMPANY: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_ CITY: \_\_\_\_\_ STATE: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_ E-MAIL: \_\_\_\_\_

TOTAL CHARGE: \$ \_\_\_\_\_ PAY BY:  Visa  MasterCard  Discover  Check (payable to Aspire Foundation)

NAME ON CARD (First Name/MI/Last Name): \_\_\_\_\_

ACCOUNT #: \_\_\_\_\_ EXPIRATION: \_\_\_\_\_

3-DIGIT SECURITY CODE: \_\_\_\_\_ SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_

For more information or to register, please call Aspire at 716-505-5510.

Event day hotline: 574-4616 • Directions: www.kbski.com or www.aspirewny.org

PROUDLY  
PRESENTED BY:



Aspire of WNY  
www.aspirewny.org  
716-505-5500

Thomas A. Sy, Executive Director

#### Mission

Aspire's mission is to support children and adults with developmental and similar disabilities, helping them to live their lives to the fullest by providing individualized assistance based on personal choices.

#### Vision

Aspire is the region's leader in supporting individuals with disabilities. We envision full participation of those we support in all aspects of community living. Toward that end, Aspire empowers individuals to maximize their potential, including those we support, those who work for us and those who work with us.

*New Visions* is published by Aspire as part of its public information and education activities. For comments or corrections, please contact Communications & Development at 716-505-5510 or dawn.allan@aspirewny.org.



Administrative Offices  
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Getzville, NY 14068

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## Universal Mind Records Demo CD

During their recent performance at the Art & Wine Celebration in September, connections were made by fans who wanted to see Universal Mind be given the opportunity to succeed.

GCR Audio Studio, owned by Robby Takac of the Goo Goo Dolls, was thrilled to assist the band.

Channel 2 News came to film some of the recording session as well as interview Amy Holdnack. "Every minute spent in the studio was an opportunity of a lifetime for the members of the band," said Amy. "They felt like this was the beginning of finally being recognized for their true musical skills, and this will help them take their performance to the next level." The demo CD will be used to further promote and highlight the unique sound of Universal Mind.



## Maria Torgalski Appointed Director of Quality Assurance and Corporate Compliance



Maria Torgalski was recently appointed Aspire's Director of Quality Assurance and Corporate Compliance. This important senior management position oversees

Aspire's incident reporting, survey activities, centralized record keeping and corporate compliance activities.

Maria rejoins Aspire having most recently served as Quality Assurance Investigator for Heritage Centers. Maria is also active in DDAWNY, is a SCIP-R Instructor and is passionate about leadership training. Maria was formerly with Aspire's Residential Division as a TC and PC.

Maria is a graduate of Greensboro College in Greensboro North Carolina.

Welcome Maria!